

Proverbs 23:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

Analysis

Drunkards and gluttons 'shall come to poverty'—excessive indulgence produces economic ruin. 'Drowsiness' (stupor from overconsumption) leads to wearing 'rags' (poverty's marker). This continues the warning from verse 20 by describing consequences. Those who pursue pleasure squander resources and neglect productive work, inevitably ending in want. The principle extends beyond literal drunkenness to any form of excess that prioritizes gratification over stewardship. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit; lack of it demonstrates carnality. Believers must practice moderation in all things, stewarding resources wisely and avoiding enslavement to appetites. Discipline yourself or reap discipline's consequences.

Historical Context

Ancient societies recognized that chronic drunkenness and gluttony led to poverty. Despite modern wealth insulating some from immediate consequences, the principle remains: indulgence produces dysfunction.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What areas of indulgence or lack of self-control are leading you toward spiritual or material poverty?
2. How can you cultivate greater discipline in eating, drinking, and consuming?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	סֹבֵּא	זֹלִל	יָרָשׁ	וְקָרַע יָמָם
H3588	For the drunkard	and the glutton	shall come to poverty	a man with rags
	H5433	H2151	H3423	H7168
יִשְׁׁ	תִּלְבֹּשׁ	וּנְמָה:		
shall clothe	and drowsiness			
H3847	H5124			

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 21:17 (Parallel theme): He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

1 Corinthians 5:11 (Parallel theme): But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

Galatians 5:21 (Parallel theme): Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Philippians 3:19 (Parallel theme): Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Proverbs 19:15 (Parallel theme): Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

Deuteronomy 21:20 (Parallel theme): And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard.

Joel 1:5 (Parallel theme): Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

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